



NEWS RELEASE

LOUISIANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Rep. St. Germain seeks funding for roads, bridges

BATON ROUGE - Rep. Karen St. Germain, D-Pierre Part, filed two pieces of legislation Monday aimed at generating new revenue to deal with the \$12 billion backlog of construction and capacity projects all over the state and to free up money needed for preservation and maintenance of roads and bridges.

St. Germain, chairwoman of the House Transportation and Public Works Committee, says the state is facing serious problems and current revenue sources “will never provide enough funding to keep up with needed highway construction, much less address future needs. We are way behind the eight ball on these issues.”

House Bill 778 calls for a one-cent tax dedicated to specific projects across the state. It’s estimated to raise \$7 billion over 10 years.

“Unless we add this penny for the betterment of our roads for the next 10 years we will never see the needs of the state infrastructure system met,” St. Germain said. “It is a dream to hope it fixes itself. It is a nightmare now!”

The bills seek to offset the depletion of revenues that are supposed to be dedicated to improving highway capacity and infrastructure projects across the state.

House Bill 777 calls for a floating additional fuels levy based on the average price per gallon at the pump over a six-month period, October through March. If prices fall below \$3 a gallon, the tax would be 25 cents a gallon. If the price is between \$3 and \$4, the tax would be 15 cents. If the price of gasoline rises above \$4 a gallon, the tax would fall to 10 cents a gallon.

The bill has an effective date of July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2025.

It costs about \$70 million a year to maintain the state’s existing infrastructure. Also, the original 16 cents per gallon gas tax established in 1984 is now worth less than 8 cents per gallon because of inflation, St. Germain said.

House Bill 778 would implement a one-cent sales and use tax increase dedicated to 15 specific infrastructure projects spread across the state. The tax would be imposed for 10 years.

All items currently exempt from state sales taxes would not be subject to taxation under the new law.

The funding would go to:

- Construct a two-lane elevated Louisiana Highway 1 South from Golden Meadow to Leesville.
- Four-lane LA 3127 from LA 31213 to LA 70 (Vacherie to Donaldsonville).

- Four-lane LA 1 from White Castle to Donaldsonville.
- Construct a new bridge over the Mississippi River connecting LA 1 to LA 30.
- Upgrade U.S. 90 in Lafayette Parish (I-10 to Broussard) to interstate standards.
- Replace and widen Interstate 10 over the Calcasieu River.
- Construct two additional lanes of I-12 in three areas (LA 21 to Airport Road, Satsuma to I-55, and Hammond to Mandeville).
- Reconstruct and improve the Alexandria/Pineville Beltway from LA 28 East to LA 28 West, including relocating LA 28 South.
- Expand I-20 to six lanes from La 546 to La 594 (Ouachita Parish)
- Four-lane the I-49 North Intercity Connector from I-20 to I-220 in Shreveport.
- Replace the Belle Chasse tunnel with a four-lane bridge on LA 23.
- Complete the Napoleon Avenue Interchange Container Phases II and III at the Port of New Orleans.
- Reconstruct the I-10 interchange at Loyola Drive.
- Four-lane US 84 from Archie to Ferriday.
- Reconstruct the New Orleans Rail Gateway.

Ken Naquin, CEO of Associated General Contractors, complimented Rep. St. Germain on her efforts to fund projects that would improve the state's highways and bridges.

"We want to thank Chairman St. Germain for having the courage and the foresight to invest in Louisiana's infrastructure," he said. "With unprecedented economic growth projected and an already stressed transportation grid, the time is now to make major improvements. AGC fully supports Rep. St. Germain's efforts and welcomes anyone to join us who is tired of the status quo."

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